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TELLER'S  
AMUSING INSTRUCTIVE AND  
ENTERTAINING TALES.

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STORIES  
ABOUT  
WHALE-CATCHING,  
AND THE  
TOILS AND PERILS OF WHALERS.

EMBELLISHED WITH  
NEW AND BEAUTIFUL ENGRAVINGS.

EDITED BY  
THOMAS TELLER.

PUBLISHED BY

S. BABCOCK

NEW HAVEN

121 CHAPEL STREET





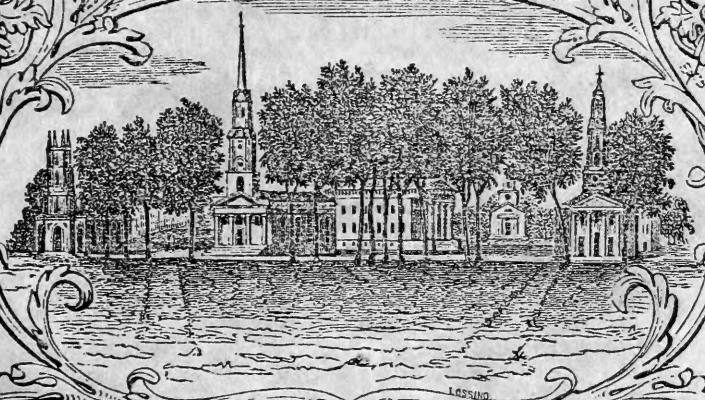


"Guttle, Gery."

STORIES  
ABOUT WHALE-CATCHING.

TOLD BY  
A FATHER TO HIS SON.

REVISED AND EDITED  
BY THOMAS TELLER.



NEW HAVEN.  
PUBLISHED BY S. BABCOCK.



# TO MY YOUNG READERS.



*My dear little Friends :*

SH387  
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The interesting and instructive "STORIES ABOUT WHALE-CATCHING," which I am now about to tell you, were written by a worthy clergyman of one of our beautiful little inland towns, and were printed in a somewhat larger book than this, several years ago. As they then delighted a great many little folks, who are now grown into men and women, I have good reason to hope they will not be uninteresting to you also. I was much pleased with them myself, for they are told in that easy and familiar style which children can readily understand. Accordingly, I thought, if I could add these, and the "STORIES ABOUT THE ELEPHANT," by the same gentleman, to my already long list of "TELLER'S TALES," I should be doing you all an acceptable favor. I am happy in being able to tell you, that the author has very kindly given me permission to do so. For this, I doubt not you will all thank him as heartily as I do. I have told you these stories almost in his own words, having only left out a small part, which I had not room for, in a book of this size. That the reading of them may prove pleasant and profitable to you all, is the wish and hope of your

Old friend and well-wisher,

*Roseville Hall, 1845.*

THOMAS TELLER.

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See Jan. 10, 1857  
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## STORIES

# ABOUT WHALE CATCHING.

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### THE STORM.

"They'll have a hard time of it to-night I fear," said the old man, as he closed the outside door, after looking abroad; "a bad time—but John is a good sailor, and the Betsey is a good ship. I guess they'll weather it. I've seen many a worse time."

"I tremble for them," said Mrs. Russel, the excellent wife of the son of the old man who had just spoken; "it will prove a gloomy night, I fear. Is there any prospect of its breaking away?"

"None," replied the old man; "the storm increases."

"Oh! my dear husband!" exclaimed Mrs. Russel, justly alarmed: "What will become of you? The Lord be gracious!"

"Do you think father will be shipwrecked?" eagerly inquired Anne, a daughter ten years of age, who, seeing her mother's anxiety, had thrown herself partly into her lap.

"I hope not, my child," replied Mrs. R.; "your father is well acquainted with the management of a ship. We should hope for the best. God can protect on the water, as well as on the land."

"But the storm is a mighty one," said Anne; "do you hear the wind roar, mother?"

"Yes, it blows severely; but, my child, we must trust all with God."

"I don't believe father will be shipwrecked," exclaimed William, a courageous, unthinking lad of twelve years; "he knows enough to keep off shore in such a storm as this."

"But the wind is strong, William," said Anne, "and grandfather told us, you know, that it was *inland*, and might drive the ship on shore. Oh dear, how bad I feel!"

"You are always frightened if the wind blows any," said William. "When I go to sea, I hope we shall not have a crying girl on board."

"But you are not going to sea," said Anne.

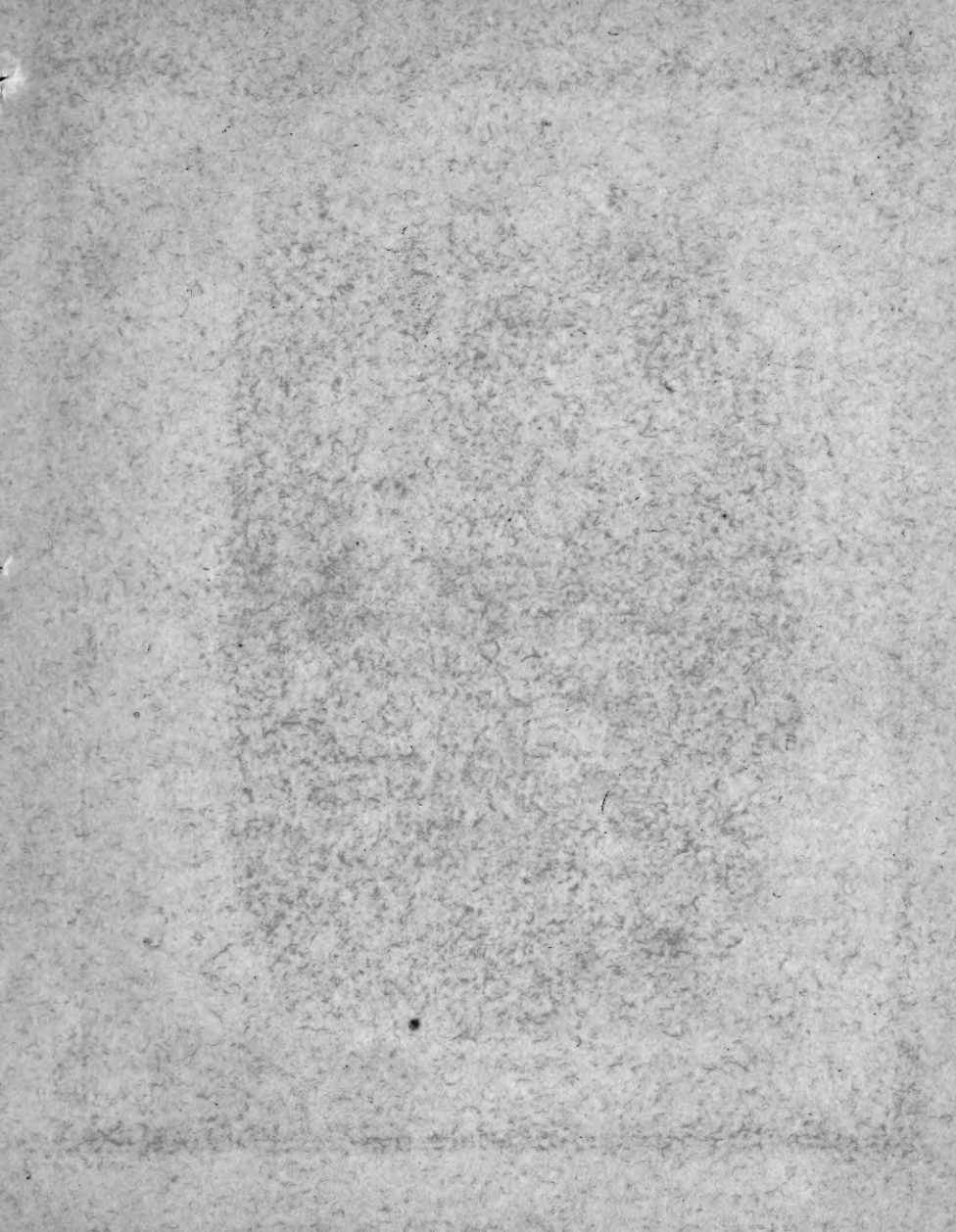
"I am going the next voyage that father makes," said William.

"But this is his last voyage, William," replied Anne. "Mother told me so."

"Did you tell her so, mother?" asked William.

"Yes, my son; if your father is prospered in his present voyage, I hope he will not go any more"







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“Well, *I* mean to go,” said William.

“I hope not, my son,” said Mrs. Russel. “It is a dangerous life. How would you feel if you were at sea to-night?”

“I wish I was on b-o-a-r-d—” This last word was feebly uttered and scarcely heard; for at that moment a flash of lightning poured its blaze through every window, and the peal of thunder which almost instantly followed, shook the house upon its foundations.

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Such was the conversation which took place at Capt. John Russel’s during a severe thunder storm which had suddenly arisen on the evening alluded to above, and raged most of the night following.

Capt. Russel was the commander of a whaling ship. He had followed this kind of life for several years, and generally with considerable success.

With the property thus acquired, he had purchased a few acres of land, on which he had built a neat house, delightfully situated near the sea, and commanding a full view of the harbor of B——, and of many leagues of the Atlantic Ocean, which stretched out on either side of the harbor.

The family of Capt. Russel consisted of a father—the old man already mentioned, who had been

an experienced master of a vessel in the same business; but who for several years, by reason of the infirmities of age, had been chiefly confined to the house; of Mrs. Russel, his wife, and William and Ann, their two children, whom we have noticed before.

Capt. Russel had now been absent on a whaling voyage, for more than two years. As he designed this to be his last voyage, he had told Mrs. Russel that he should prolong it till his cargo was full; but that he hoped he should be permitted to return in at least two years. That time had now passed away; and for several weeks the family had been anxiously expecting his arrival. During this time, the children had daily watched the vessels as they hove in sight, and passed along, and often did they imagine that the *Betsey-Anne*, the ship in which Capt. Russel had sailed, was approaching. 'Grandfather! grandfather!' or 'mother! mother! they're coming! they're coming!'—was frequently heard; and so common had this exclamation become, that neither their grandfather or mother, at length, paid much attention to it.

On the morning of the day preceding the storm to which we have alluded, the children had spied a ship at quite a distance, which, as usual, they

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announced as the Betsey-Anne. Little attention was paid to this announcement at the time. The day was fine, although warm and sultry; but the wind was so light, that she made but little progress. By noon, however, she had approached so near, and looked so suspicious even to the naked eye, that the aged grandfather brought forth a spy-glass, which, in common times, no one handled but himself. It was a favorite instrument—one that had been his companion for many a voyage, and had enabled him to escape many a ship of war, and many an iceberg in the Northern Ocean.

"It's certainly the Betsey-Anne," said William.

"I don't know, master William, I don't know," said the old man. "Wiser folks than you have been many a time mistaken, but *this*," said he, pointing to his spy-glass, "I guess will determine the point."

With some effort the old gentleman, accompanied by William and Anne, reached a good place at a short distance from the house, and the observation began.

"Ah!" exclaimed the aged grandfather, as he vainly attempted to hold the spy-glass steady, "I was once a good marksman; but my day is over." He contrived, however, to catch a glance of the ship, but his eye was dim, and he could only doubt.

“Grandfather, grandfather, let me look!” said William; “I am sure I can tell. It’s her! it’s certainly her! It’s the Betsey-Anne—I’m sure it is,” exclaimed he, as he looked through the glass.

“Pray, brother William, let me look,” said Anne.

“Have a little patience,” said William. “You can not tell. I don’t believe you can point the glass even so as to see her.”

Again William was positive that it was the Betsey-Anne. He could see her flag, and he *thought* he could see her name, which, it was known, was painted in broad letters upon it.

“Ah!” said the old man, “it may be true that it is the Betsey-Anne; it may be true that her flag is flying; but her distance is too great for you to read her name, Master William.”

William, however, felt certain; and Anne, when she looked, was almost sure, although it was doubtful whether she saw the ship at all; even their mother, who was finally called, could not but think she saw—indistinctly, indeed—the favorite name.

“It may be,” said the old man; “my eyes are dim—I had only a glimpse. Heaven grant it is.”

The afternoon proved hot and sultry. Scarcely a breath of wind waved the leaves of the trees, and it was quite plain that the ship, whatever she was,



was motionless on the water. At last they saw her sails lowered, for the purpose, as was supposed, of waiting until the evening breeze should enable her to approach the harbor.

In a few hours, however, a dark cloud was seen gathering in the west, and indications of an approaching storm came thick and fast. The cloud at length rose; the lightnings were seen flashing at a distance, and now then a peal of thunder broke upon the ear. By turns the vessel and the cloud were watched. At length the anxious and watchful group upon the hill saw, with delight, the sails of the vessel spread to the wind. It was apparent that an effort was making to reach a more secure place of anchorage. Indeed, the hope was indulged, that the storm might delay until the vessel could reach her destined birth. For a short time she was seen proudly urging her way through the waters; but soon she was seen turning her course, and once more standing out into the waters of the broad Atlantic.

"What can it mean, mother?" inquired the anxious little Anne.

"Mean," replied William, who undertook to answer the question, "they don't mean to get on the rocks; that's what it means."

"There's danger, my dear," said the old man, "of an inland breeze. Seamen like sea-room in a night like this. They are wise in standing out."

The rapid approach of the storm now warned the family to seek the shelter of the house, and here occurred the conversation with which we commenced our story.

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#### THE ARRIVAL.

The storm continued to rage, as we have intimated, until a late hour of the night. The anxiety of Mrs. Russel, although she was one of those whose hearts are fixed, trusting in God, prevented her seeking repose until towards morning. Even then her slumbers were broken and unrefreshing, and at an early hour she rose under the sad uncertainty of what might have befallen her husband, if indeed the ship they had seen was his.

It was a delicious summer morning. The clouds had dispersed; the sun was coming forth in all his glory; and although the waters of the ocean were rolling in long and distant waves, it was apparent that as the cause of this agitation had ceased, tranquility would soon repose on the bosom of the deep.

It is natural to suppose that the eyes of the whole family would be directed with eager gaze upon the harbor and ocean. They were so. But not a single vessel was now in sight, unless it was one which was aground on the opposite side of the harbor; this was a smaller vessel than the Betsey-Ann. The shores were scrutinized, but, except this vessel, nothing looked like a wreck.

Mrs. Russel communicated this intelligence to her aged father, whose infirmities had prevented him from rising as early as the rest of the family.

"It is good news!" said the old man: "I trust they succeeded in getting out to sea."

"No doubt they did," said William, who had followed his mother to the bed-side of his grandfather; "they'll be in before night, I dare say."

"It may be they've sunk," said Anne. "It was a dreadful storm."

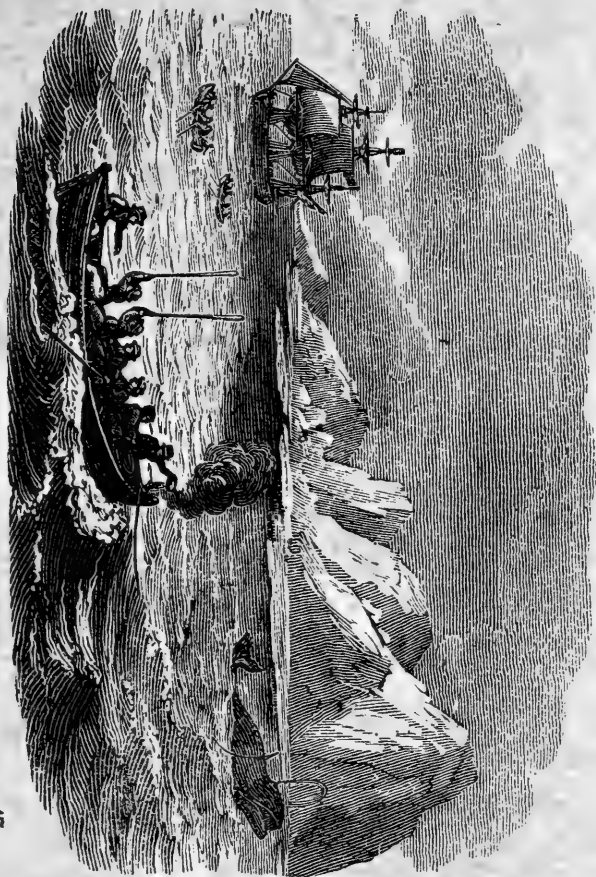
"I hope not, my child," said the old man. "The wind where they were, might have been favorable to carry them out to sea. Before a fair wind, even if it be strong, a sound ship is not easily sunk."

The prediction of William, that the Betsey-Ann would arrive that day, was not realized. Indeed, before night a rumor reached the family

that several vessels had been stranded on the shore, several miles from their residence; and, as conjecture would have it, it was suspected by some, that among them was the Betsey-Anne.

“It is of little consequence,” said Mrs. Russel, “what becomes of the vessels and their cargoes, if the crews be but safe.” But as to this, nothing satisfactory could be learned. It proved, however, not long after, that the vessels in question were chiefly coasters. No tidings could be obtained to satisfy Mrs. Russel that even their suspicions were correct, that the vessel which they had seen belonged to her husband. This she was now willing to believe, glad as she would have been, under other circumstances, to have hailed his arrival. This conjecture was the more firmly believed, as no intelligence could be obtained, that the Betsey-Anne had either been seen or spoken, which it was thought she probably would have been, had she actually arrived.

The morning of the fourth day brought tidings, however, of Captain Russel. On that morning, William had risen earlier than the rest of the family; and, casting his eye on the harbor, he discovered a vessel, the flag of which he knew to be the Betsey-Anne’s, slowly approaching the



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place where she usually lay when at anchor. He stayed not to mark minutely her altered appearance; but, rushing into the house, vociferated from the entrance, in a voice which roused every inmate of the family :—" They've come—They've come !"

Mrs. R. and Anne soon made their appearance; and, although the former well knew the natural confidence of her son, she was more inclined than usual to believe him, in this instance, correct.

"I really hope you are correct, my son," replied Mrs. Russel, approaching the window, and casting her eye down the harbor, on the vessel in question.

"*Now* what do you think, mother?" earnestly inquired William, catching her countenance, as he put the question.

"Why, my son, I am not sure," said Mrs. Russel. "We shall have a better view from the brow of the hill."

Accordingly they all proceeded to a spot at some distance, which commanded a still better view than the one from the house.

"I don't believe it is the Betsey-Anne," said little Anne,—*"why, how she looks! what can the matter be, mother?"*

"They must have had a sad time of it," said Mrs. Russel, *"whoever they be."*

“Why, mother, the masts are all gone, I should think,” said Anne.

“They have come in under a jury-mast,” said Mrs. Russel. “They must have encountered a terrible storm. The Lord be praised, that they have escaped.”

“It is the Betsey-Anne, then?” said William, observing the emotion of his mother.

“I believe it is, my son,” said Mrs. Russel. “Let us be thankful that God has been merciful. If your father and his men are only safe—”

“Oh! how I tremble,” said Anne—“perhaps father was washed overboard!”

“I trust not, my child,” said Mrs. Russel—at the same time preparing to look through a spy-glass, which she had brought with her.

Her hand trembled some—what affectionate wife’s hand, under such circumstances, would not have trembled?—as she brought the glass to bear upon the vessel. For a moment the blood forsook her cheek—but it soon returned, and a sweet smile was seen playing there—

“My children! your father *has* arrived—he is safe.”

“Can you see him! can you see him?” earnestly inquired William—“pray, mother, let me look.”

"Oh!" said the enraptured boy, "I can see him; he is looking through a spy-glass directly at *us*."

"Let me look, brother William," said Anne.

"Hold," said William; "pretty soon—I want to catch a glimpse of old Tom. He was so old, that father said, you know, he feared he would die. But he *would* go."

"Can you see your father, my child?" inquired Mrs. Russel, as she held the glass for Anne.

"Why, I don't know," said Anne, "I see something, but—"

"I hardly think you will be able to see him, through the glass," observed Mrs. Russel—"but I hope you will see him here, before night."

"Oh!" said Anne, "I *do* hope—"

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The progress of the vessel was slow, owing to the smallness of the sail under which she came, and the lightness of the breeze which prevailed. But, at length, she reached her usual anchoring place, some distance from the wharf. Soon after this a boat put off, and was urged towards the main land, in fine style, by several hearty oarsmen.

Mrs. Russel and her children had arrived at the wharf, ready to receive and welcome the husband and the father.

It was a happy meeting—but I shall not attempt to describe it. My little readers may judge how happy it was—a meeting of a fond husband, and an affectionate wife—of a kind father, and delighted children; and this after a long separation—after a tempest, too, which had well nigh separated them forever.

In a short time the party proceeded towards the house. The interview between Capt. R. and his aged father was almost too much for the old man.

“I didn’t much expect to see you again, in *this* world,” said the hoary-headed old man. “You must have had a hard time of it, at last.”

“A severe storm, indeed,” replied Capt. Russel, “but a good Providence preserved us.”

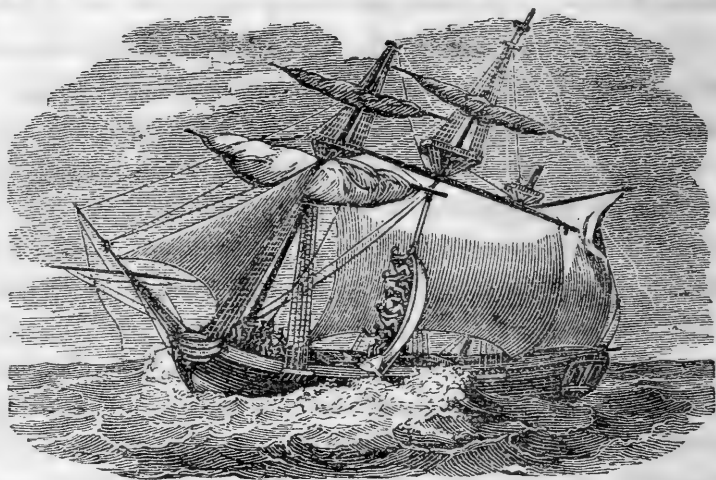
“A merciful Providence, truly!” ejaculated the old man.

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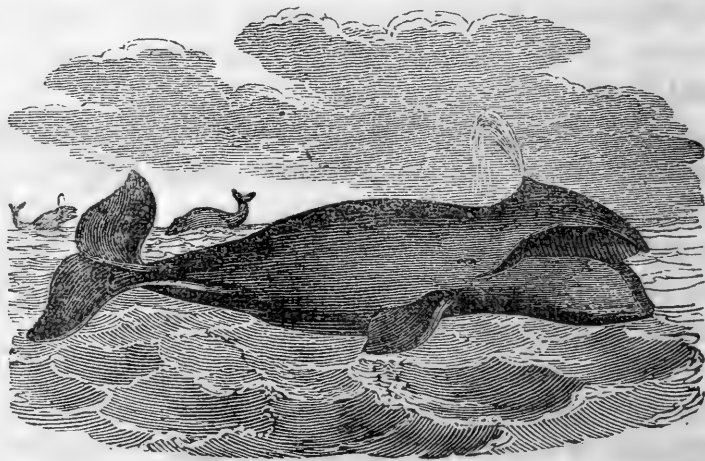
#### THE EXPLANATION.

Capt. Russel now proceeded briefly to say, that his voyage, “though unexpectedly long, had been pleasant and prosperous; and on the morning you first saw the Betsey-Anne, we had a fair prospect of entering the harbor and anchoring before night. But the wind suddenly failed us, and during the day we were obliged to exercise patience.





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Towards evening, the prospect of a storm was such, that I felt it important to get further in. I indulged the hope, that we might anchor at our usual place before it came on. For a short time the wind favored us—the vessel moved rapidly towards the desired haven. But it was soon apparent to us all, that our only chance of safety was, in getting as fast as possible out to sea. Accordingly the ship's head was turned towards the ocean; and, instead of seeing you that night, as we had fondly hoped, we had before us the prospect of a watery grave. My men acted bravely, and vied with one another to save the ship. It was the most tempestuous night I ever witnessed. No one could venture across the deck, but at the hazard of being swept away.

All at once, a cry was made by a man forward : Captain, two men overboard !—haul up !—haul up !—at the same time, I heard the voice of Tom crying—Massa, massa, save poor Tom ? I'm lost, I'm lost !—and of Anderson, at a still greater distance, calling aloud for assistance.

No time was to be lost. Yet the question was, what could be done ? The darkness of the night rendered it impossible to see the poor fellows—we could only hear them—and every minute was hur-

rying the vessel farther from them. I seized my trumpet, and calling as loud as I was able, bid them have good courage—and assured them that I would do all in my power to save them.

“Did they hear you, father?” asked William.

“Yes,” replied Capt. Russel, “it afterwards appeared that they did; otherwise they would soon have relinquished their efforts, and sunk. Instantly I ordered the ship about. It was a hazardous experiment, and well nigh had we been lost; for in luffing, the ship fell into a trough of the sea, and a fair breach was made over her. She rose again, however. Get ready the boat, said I. Sir, said the mate, it’s all in vain; no boat can live a single half-hour in such a sea as this.

Get ready the boat instantly, I repeated. In a few minutes it was lowered. Now, my brave lads, who will put their lives into God’s hands, and go with me?

Here! said Thompson, stepping forward.—Here, captain! exclaimed Nelson. Enough, said I—the very men I would have chosen. Lower away—push off—take care—may God preserve us! Fortunately we got clear of the ship in safety.

Farewell, captain, exclaimed Mr. Kellogg, the mate. Farewell! farewell! said one and all; and

Quite safe—quite safe—was the joyful answer.

Wonderful! wonderful! exclaimed one and all.

The time of most danger had now come. The heaving and rolling of the ship was dreadful. It was quite impossible to board her in the ordinary way, with safety.

What shall we do? inquired Mr. Kellogg.

Go aloft, said I, and fix a tackle to the fore-yard; then throw us the rope with a strong hook to it.

This was soon done; and now we ventured cautiously near enough to seize the rope, and made fast the hook to the bow of the boat.

Now, said I, let each one hold tight; but poor Tom said he could not hold on; so I lashed him fast by means of a spare rope. Heave away, my lads—steady—strong. Up we went, boat and all. Higher still, said I, that we may be certain of clearing the ship's side.

This done, the boat was swung back and forth, until she was directly over the deck. It was a moment of great danger; our fall might be our death, but it was our only chance of safety. Now, down! let her fall! said I,—and down we came. The crash was tremendous; the boat was nearly stoved in pieces. No one escaped injury; but, thanks to God, no lives were lost. Poor Tom

suffered the most—his thigh was broken, and he was otherwise much bruised; but he is now as comfortable as could be expected.

Once more on board, we wore ship, and again put before the wind. From this time the storm continued to increase, and before morning our masts went by the board. Soon after day-break, its violence was past, and before noon we were able to begin preparations to erect a jury-mast, which having done, we once more directed our course homeward."

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#### THE WHALE.

In the course of a few weeks, Captain Russel found himself at leisure to enjoy the company of his family. During his absence, both William and Anne had grown very much. William, especially, was beginning to have a considerable stock of ideas on many subjects; but if his thoughts dwelt on any one subject more than another, it was on the pleasures of a sea-faring life, especially when connected with the wonders of whale catching. All this was natural. It had been the business of his grandfather for years, to whose

stories he had listened with delight; and the business of his father, too, about whom, while absent, his mother had told him many a tale.

It was natural, therefore, for William to think much, and talk much, about going a whaling, when he should be old enough. And it was apparent that he felt quite unhappy when his father said that he should go to sea no more, and that he destined his son for a different sphere of life.

"You will tell me then, father," said William, "what you know about the whale, and whale catching, if I may not go?"

"I shall do so with pleasure," replied Captain Russel, "if it will gratify you, my son, and stand instead of your following a life so full of toil and danger as that of whale-catching."

The evening following, the family having assembled, Captain Russel entered, seated himself, and opening a book that he had brought in with him, presented to his children a fine picture of a whale, observing at the same time, "it is a very correct drawing of the *common* whale."

"Are there more kinds of whales than one?" inquired William.

"Several varieties, about each of which I will tell you something," answered Capt. Russel.

“The RAZOR-BACK is the largest animal of the whale tribe, and probably the most powerful and most bulky of all created beings. This kind of whale, sometimes called the *Physalis*, is about one hundred feet long, and from thirty to forty feet round. The elephant seldom exceeds nine feet in length, and weighs not more than eight or nine thousand pounds; how small, then, would he be, compared with an animal one hundred feet long, ten or twelve feet thick, and weighing one hundred tons!”

“One hundred tons, father!” exclaimed William, “do you mean that the whale weighs one hundred tons?”

“Yes, my son, and probably often more. This is the Razor-back whale. The *Common* whale is seldom so long, nor is he near as heavy. The Razor-back whale is both longer and more slender than the *common* whale. It is also more violent, and swims with greater velocity. It sometimes goes twelve miles an hour. Its breathing, or blowing, is also more violent.”

“Breathing! father; do whales breathe?”

“Yes, my son, all fish breathe. But whales, being unable to separate the air from the water, as fishes do, by means of their gills, must come to



the surface of the water. This they usually do once in five or ten minutes; but sometimes, when feeding, once in fifteen or twenty minutes. They generally remain at the surface of the water about two minutes, and blow eight or nine times.

"Blow! what is meant by that, father?"

"You observed, my son," replied Capt. R. "in the picture of the whale, the appearance of water or vapor issuing from blow-holes placed nearly on the crown of the whale's head. These are supposed to be his nostrils, through which he forces the water with so much power, as to resemble the discharge of a cannon.

The Razor-back whale, although much larger than the common whale, is seldom sought for by fishermen, both because it is much more dangerous to attack, and yields much less oil, and that of an inferior quality."

"Pray, father, how much oil does this kind of whale yield?" asked William.

"Generally not more than twelve tuns; but the largest sized common whale often yields thirty."

"You have not told us, father," observed William, "what ocean this whale frequents."

"It is found in great numbers," replied Capt. R. "in the Polar Seas, around the island of Nova

Zembla, Spitzbergen, and other high latitudes. They are often seen sporting around the icebergs, those immense mountains of ice which, forming on the coasts of the Northern regions, are at last detached, and float into the broad ocean. These are often two or three thousand feet high; and, at a distance, strongly resemble castles, or perhaps a fleet under full sail. Around these mountains of ice, so dreadful to whaling ships, the Razor-backs play without fear.

The BROAD-NOSED WHALE.—This species frequents the coasts of Scotland, Ireland, and Norway, and is said to feed principally upon herring. Its length is commonly about fifty feet, although I have read of several which were killed on the coast of Ireland, which were from seventy to eighty feet. This whale resembles, in several particulars, the Razor-back, with which it is usually classed; but it yields still less oil, and is never sought after as an object of profit.

The FINNER seldom, if ever, exceeds fifty feet in length, and twenty feet in circumference. It is so called, I suppose, from its having a large fin on its back, which is wanting in other species of the whale. I have read of this kind of whale, but I never saw one. It is found on the coast of Norway and Shetland, but is not very abundant.

The BEAKED WHALE is the smallest of the whole race, or genus. It inhabits principally the Norwegian seas, where it has been found of the length of about twenty feet.

The SPERMACETI WHALE derives its name from a soft and oily-feeling substance, which is found in its head, and to which the name of *sperm*, or *spermaceti*, has been given. Great use is made of this, for candles, it being thought much superior to tallow, as it burns longer, and gives a more brilliant light. This whale has been occasionally taken in the northern seas, especially on the American coast; but is found in larger numbers in the Southern Pacific Ocean, where a great many of them are annually killed by American whalers.

The common whale is generally found single, but spermaceti whales usually clan together; and herds are frequently seen containing two hundred or more. They are attacked as follows:—Whenever a number of them are seen, four boats, each provided with two or three lines, two harpoons, four lances, and a crew of six men, proceed in pursuit, and, if possible, each strikes or fastens to a distinct animal, and each crew kill their own. When one of the herd is struck, he commonly takes the lead, and is followed by the rest. He

seldom descends far under, but generally swims off with great rapidity, stopping after a short course, so that the boat can be brought up to him by the line, or rowed sufficiently near to lance him. In the agonies of death, the struggles of the animal are truly tremendous, and the surface of the ocean is lashed into foam by the motions of the fins and tail. Tall jets of blood are discharged from the blow-holes, which show that the wounds have taken mortal effect, and seeing this, the boats are kept aloof, lest they should be dashed in pieces by the violent efforts of the victim. When a herd is attacked in this way, ten or twelve of the number are often killed. Those which are only wounded, are seldom captured. After the whale is killed, the boats tow it to the side of the ship. If the weather is fair, and other whales are in sight, they are again sent to the attack.

Next comes the separation of the blubber, or fat, from the animal. This is called *flensing*, and is sometimes done differently from the manner used in Polar whaling. A strip of blubber is cut in a spiral direction, and being raised by a pulley, turns the whale round as on an axis, until all the blubber is stripped off. The material contained within the head, consisting of spermaceti, mixed

with oil, being in a fluid state while warm, is taken out of large whales in buckets, while the animal remains in the water; but in smaller ones the part of the head containing the spermaceti is hoisted on deck before the cavity is opened.

The substances taken from the head congeal as soon as cold, and in this state are put into the casks, and are purified at the end of the voyage, on shore. The oil is extracted from the blubber much after the manner in which tallow is tried, by means of two copper boilers, with which whale ships are always furnished. As the oil is extracted, it is thrown into coolers, and after about twenty-four hours it is transferred to casks. At first, the coppers are heated by fire made with wood; but, afterwards, the refuse blubber is used, and produces a fierce fire.

The quantity of oil obtained from a spermaceti whale, is much less than that obtained from the common whale, but is far superior in value, being mixed with the substance called spermaceti.

The NARWAL is another species of whale. It is generally less than sixteen feet in length, and differs but little from a small whale, excepting that it has a long spiral tooth or tusk, which has obtained for it the name of *Unicorn*. This tooth

grows from the left side of the head, and is sometimes nine or ten feet long. The use of this singular and formidable tusk is not known.

The Narwal is a harmless animal. It is easily taken; sometimes being shot with a rifle, and at other times harpooned. It usually yields two or three tuns of fine oil. The Greenlanders and Esquimaux employ the whole animal for various uses. The flesh is eaten; the oil burned in their lamps; the intestines wrought into lines and dresses; and the tusks used for spears. It is said that the king of Denmark has a magnificent and valuable throne made entirely of Narwal tusks.

I have now told you, my son, about the several kinds of whales which are found in the ocean, excepting one."

"Pray, father, what is that?" asked William.

"The COMMON WHALE,—I say common, because it is more abundant than the other kinds; or, at least, is more productive of oil, and is sought after by fishermen, as upon the whole more valuable. I have read many great stories about the size of the whale; but the longest which I ever measured was sixty feet. Some have been taken which were a few feet longer, but any seldom, if ever, exceed seventy feet. In the largest place

they are from ten to twelve feet through, or from thirty to forty feet in circumference. Its head is generally about one third of its length, and when its mouth is open, it is capable of holding a merchant ship's jolly-boat, filled with men."

"Father," said William, "in the picture which you have shown me of the whale, I can see no *ears*—did the engraver forget to put them on?"

"He very properly omitted them," replied Captain Russel, "because it has no external ear, and no hole or orifice for the admission of sound, can be discovered till the skin is removed."

"Can he hear quick, then?"

"No, he seems dull of hearing. Even the shout of a person, when only at the distance of a ship's length, seems to be unnoticed by him; but when the water is calm, a slight splashing alarms him."

"Does he see objects at a great distance?"

"When lying on the surface of the water, he does not see far; but, when under the surface, whales discover one another in clear water at an amazing distance; yet their eyes are not much larger than those of a common sized ox."

"In what part of the whale is the whale-bone found?" asked William.

"In the mouth," replied Captain Russel, "across

which it lies in layers, called *laminæ*; upwards of three hundred of which are found in every full grown whale. These layers, in their greatest length, are sometimes fifteen feet, but generally from ten to twelve. Immediately under the skin lies the blubber, or fat, which is from eight to ten, and even twenty inches thick, varying in different parts, as well as in different individuals. The color of the whale is velvet black, grey, and sometimes white, with a tinge of yellow. The color of the blubber is yellowish white; sometimes yellow, or red. In its fresh state it has no unpleasant smell, and it is not until the end of the voyage, when the cargo of a whale-ship is unstowed, that the latter becomes disagreeable.

The tail of the whale is a great curiosity. Its length is seldom more than five or six feet; but its width is from eighteen to twenty-four. By means of this, it urges its bulky weight through the billows and depths of the ocean, and ascends to the surface with such rapidity as to throw its huge form almost entirely out of water. Sometimes he places himself in a perpendicular position, with his head downwards, and rearing his tale on high, beats the water with awful violence. On these occasions, the sea foams, and vapors



darken the air; the lashing is heard several miles off, like the roar of a distant tempest."

"Is it known, father," inquired William, "upon what whales live?"

"Some kinds live upon herring, and perhaps larger fish; but the food of the common whale is a kind of *insect*, which is said to be no larger than a bean. This insect floats in clusters upon the ocean, and is their principal food."

"Is it known to what age whales attain?"

"Not with certainty, although it is supposed they live to a great age. At twenty or twenty-five years, they reach their full growth. After this age, the blubber is harder, and yields less oil, and the color of the whale becomes more grey, with a yellowish tinge of the white parts about the head."

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WHALE SHIPS, BOATS, AND INSTRUMENTS.

"Before I tell you about the manner in which whales are taken," continued Capt. Russel, "it will be proper to let you know something of the vessels, boats, and instruments used in this business.

The first object is to fit out a ship suited to the trade. Formerly, whale-ships were so slightly built, that many of them were lost amidst the

tempests and ice with which the polar regions abound. Those of later construction possess a peculiar degree of strength.

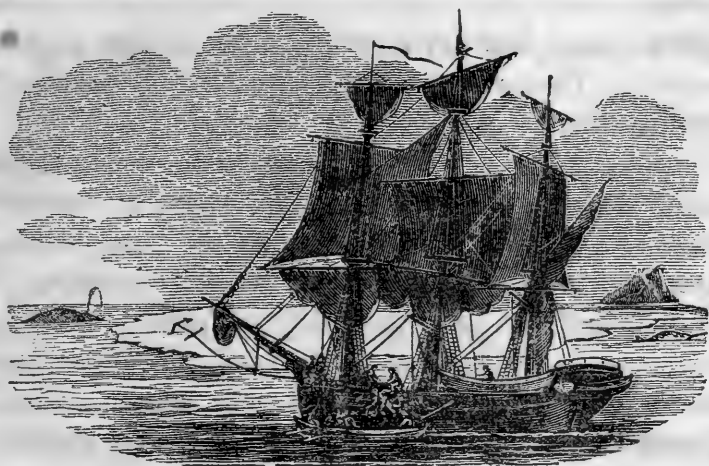
Whale-ships are of different dimensions; but those of about 340 tons are thought to be most desirable. Each ship is furnished with several boats, and manned with forty to fifty seamen.

The boats being very liable to receive damage, are built with reference to strength and buoyancy. The largest kind, called six-oared boats, are able to carry seven men, six of whom, besides the harpooner, are rowers. Besides the men, they carry six or eight hundred weight of whale-lines. The other boats are somewhat smaller, being five-oared boats, four-oared boats, &c.

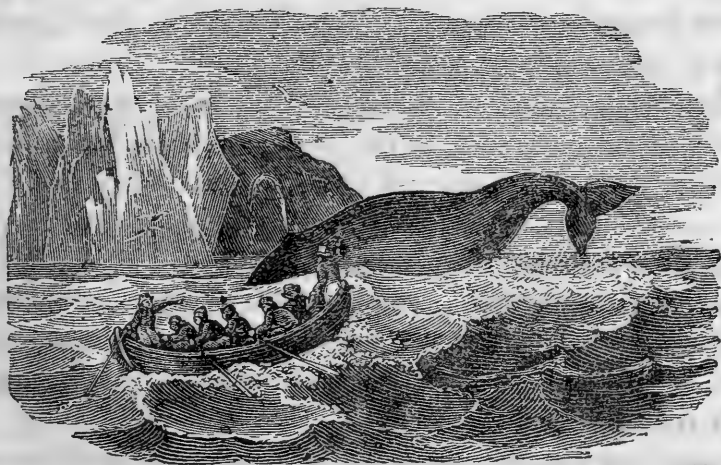
In the capture of whales, the most important instrument, perhaps, is the harpoon, which is made of iron, and about three feet in length. (*See Fig. 1.*)

Next in importance to the harpoon, is the lance, which is a spear of iron of the length of six feet. The blade of this instrument is made very thin, and exceedingly sharp. (*See Fig. 2.*) The use of this is, to penetrate the vital parts of the whale, and to occasion his death.

Another instrument which has sometimes been used, is called the harpoon-gun. (*See Fig. 3.*) It



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consists of a kind of swivel, with a wrought iron barrel about two feet in length. This gun was invented in the year 1731, and has since been much improved. A harpoon made for the purpose, (*See Fig. 4.*) it is said may be thrown from it with effect, for the distance of forty yards.

As soon as a whaling-ship has arrived in those seas which are the haunt of the whale, the crew must be every moment on the alert, keeping watch day and night. The boats are kept hanging by the sides of the ship, ready to be launched in a few minutes, and when the state of the sea admits, one of them is usually manned and afloat. The captain, or some principal officer, seated in the main top, surveys the waters to a great distance, and the instant he sees the back of the huge animal which they seek to attack, emerging from the waves, gives notice to the watch, who are stationed on deck; part of whom leap into a boat, which is instantly lowered down, and followed by a second, if the fish be a large one. Each of the boats has a harpooner, and one or two subordinate officers, and is provided with an immense quantity of rope coiled together and stowed in different quarters of it, the several parts being spliced together, so

as to form a continued line, usually exceeding four thousand feet in length. To the end is attached the harpoon, an instrument formed, not to pierce and kill the animal, but, by entering and remaining fixed in the body, to prevent its escape. One of the boats is now rowed towards the whale, in the deepest silence, cautiously avoiding to give an alarm, of which he is very susceptible. Having approached as near as is consistent with safety, the harpooner darts his instrument into the back of the monster.

This is a critical moment; for when this mighty animal feels himself struck, he often throws himself into violent convulsive movements, vibrating in the air his tremendous tail, one lash of which is sufficient to dash a boat in pieces. More commonly, however, he plunges with rapid flight into the depths of the sea, or beneath the thickest fields and mountains of ice. While he is thus moving with such rapidity, the utmost diligence must be used, that the line to which the harpoon is attached may run off smoothly and readily along with him. Should it be entangled for a moment, the strength of the whale is such, that he would draw the boat and crew after him under the water.

The first boat ought to be quickly followed by a second, to supply more line when the first is run out, which often takes place in eight or ten minutes. When the crew of a boat see the line in danger of being all run off, they hold up, one, two, or three oars, to intimate their pressing need of a supply. At the same time, they turn the rope once or twice round a kind of post, called the *bollard*, by which the motion of the line, and the career of the animal, are somewhat retarded. This, however, is a delicate operation, which brings the side of the boat down to the very edge of the water, and if the rope is drawn at all too tight, may sink it altogether. While the line is whirling round the bollard, the friction is so violent, that the harpooner is enveloped in smoke, and water must be constantly poured on to prevent it from catching *fire*. When, after all, no aid arrives, and the crews find that the line must run out, they have only one resource,—they *cut it*, losing thereby, not only the whale, but the harpoon and all the ropes of the boat.

The period during which a wounded whale remains under water is various, but is averaged by Mr. Scoresby at half an hour. Then, pressed by the necessity of respiration, he appears above,

often considerably distant from the spot where he was harpooned, and in a state of great exhaustion, which the same ingenious writer ascribes to the severe pressure that he has endured, when placed beneath a column of water seven or eight hundred fathoms deep.

All the boats have, in the mean-time, been spreading themselves in various directions, that one at least may be within a *start*, as it is called, of the point of his rising, where they can easily reach him with one or two more harpoons before he again descends, as he usually stays at the surface for a few minutes. On his re-appearance, a general attack is made with lances, which are struck as deep as possible, to reach and penetrate the vital parts. Blood, mixed with oil, streams copiously from his wounds and from the blow-holes, dyeing the sea to a great distance, and sometimes drenching the boats and crews.

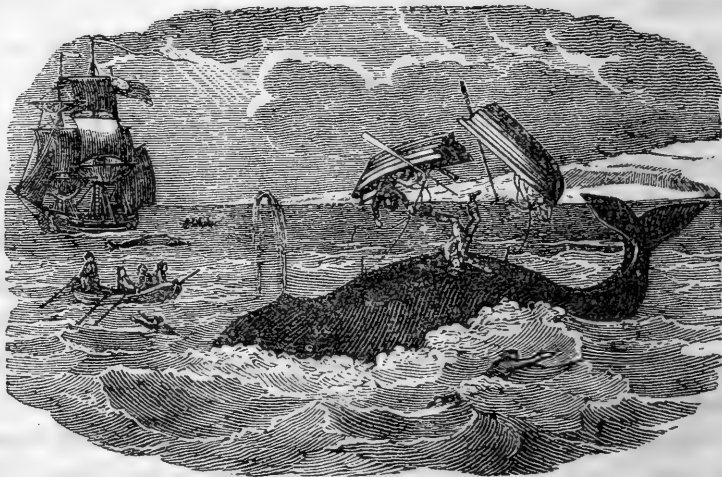
The animal now becomes more and more exhausted; but at the approach of his dissolution he often makes a convulsive and energetic struggle, rearing his tail high in the air, and whirling it with a noise which is heard at the distance of several miles. At length, quite overpowered and exhausted, he lays himself on his side or







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back and expires. No time is lost in piercing the tail with two holes, through which ropes are passed, which being fastened to the boats, they drag the fish to the vessel amid shouts of joy.

The whale being thus caught and secured to the sides of the ship, the next operation is that of *flensing*; that is, extracting the blubber and whale-bone, about which I have told you sufficient to give you a general idea; excepting that in the case of the common whale, the blubber is kept in casks until the arrival of the vessel at home, when the oil is extracted in large copper boilers."

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#### DANGERS OF THE WHALE-FISHERY.

Here William interrupted his father, by observing, that even if it were a toilsome business, whale catching must be a pleasant employment.

"Ah!" exclaimed the old grandfather, "had you seen as much as I have of it, you would think it more than toilsome."

"Yes, indeed," said Capt. Russel. "In spite of the utmost care, the dangers are imminent and manifold. Few men pursue the business

many years without seeing others suffer and perish, if calamity does not come upon themselves."

"Pray father," inquired William, "wherein lies the great danger? I thought the danger just enough to give some life and interest to the business."

"Well," said Captain Russel, "I must relate some of the catastrophes which have befallen whaling-ships and their crews, and then, master William, we will leave you to say whether this kind of life has more of pleasure than of danger."

Whalers are often in very great danger by reason of the whale, which they are pursuing, becoming much *enraged*, and suddenly turning upon them. The Dutch writers mention a man by the name of Vienkes, who, after a whale had been struck, was hastening with a second boat to the support of the first. The fish, however, rose, and with its head struck the boat so furiously, that it was shivered to pieces, and Vienkes was thrown with its fragments on the back of the huge animal. Even then this bold mariner darted a second harpoon into the body of his victim; but unfortunately he got entangled in the line and could not extricate himself, while the other party were unable to approach near

enough to save him. At last, however, the harpoon was disengaged, and he swam to the boat.

Mr. Scoresby, in one of his earliest voyages, saw a boat thrown several yards into the air, from which it fell on its side, plunging the crew into the sea. They were happily soon taken up, when only one was found to have received severe injury. A ship on the Labrador coast, in 1802, had a boat thrown fifteen feet into the air. It came down into the water, with its keel upwards; but fortunately all the men except one were saved.

The crew of Mr. Scoresby, the elder, in 1807, had struck a whale, which soon re-appeared, but in a state of such violent agitation that no one durst approach it. The captain courageously undertook to encounter it, in a boat by himself, and succeeded in striking a second harpoon. But another boat having advanced too close, the animal brandished its tail with so much fury, that the harpooner, who was directly under, judged it most prudent to leap into the sea. And it was well for him that he did so, for the tail struck the boat in the very place that he had left, and cut the boat entirely asunder, so that

if he had remained he must have been dashed in pieces. Happily all the others escaped injury.

The results, however, are not always so fortunate. The *Aimwell*, of Whitby, in 1810, lost three men out of seven; and in 1812, the *Henrietta*, of the same port, lost four men out of six, by the boats being upset and the crews thrown into the sea.

In 1809, one of the men belonging to the *Resolution*, of Whitby, struck a sucking whale; after which the mother, being seen wheeling rapidly round, was narrowly watched. Mr. Scoresby, being on this occasion the harpooner of another boat, was selecting the situation where the parent fish would probably re-appear, when suddenly an invisible blow from the animal beneath the water, stove in fifteen feet of the bottom of his boat, which filled with water and instantly sunk. The crew were, however, saved.

*Entanglement in the line*, while the retreating whale is drawing it off with rapidity, is often productive of serious disasters. A sailor, belonging to the *John*, of Greenock, in 1818, happening to step into a coil of running rope, had a foot entirely carried off, and was obliged to have the lower part of the leg amputated.

A harpooner, belonging to the *Henrietta*, of Whitby, very imprudently threw some of the line under his feet. A sudden start of the fish made it twist round his body. He had just time to cry out—"Clear away the line! Oh dear!" when he was cut almost asunder, dragged overboard, and never more seen.

A whale sometimes causes great danger by *proving to be alive*, after being supposed to be dead. Mr. Scoresby mentions one which appeared to be so decidedly dead, that he himself had leaped on the tail, and was busy putting a rope through it, when he suddenly felt the animal sinking from under him. He made a spring towards a boat some yards distant—succeeded in catching hold of it, and was assisted on board. The fish then moved forwards, reared his tail aloft, and shook it with such prodigious violence, that it resounded to the distance of several miles. After a few minutes of this violent exertion, he rolled on his side and expired.

Even after *life is extinct, all danger is not over*. In the operation of flensing, the harpooners sometimes fall into the whale's mouth, and are in danger of being drowned. If there is a heavy swell, they are drenched, and sometimes washed over by the

surge. Sometimes they have their ropes broken, and are wounded by each others' knives.

Mr. Scoresby mentions a harpooner who, after the flensing was completed, had his foot attached by a hook to the carcass, when the latter was inadvertently cut away. The man caught hold of the gunwale of the boat. But the whole immense mass being now suspended by his body, occasioned the most excruciating torture, and even exposed him to the danger of being torn in two. His companions, however, contrived to hook the carcass with a grapnel and bring it back to the surface.

A story is related of the escape of a whale, in the year 1812, from a boat's crew belonging to the Resolution, Capt. Whitby, which would be quite incredible, were it not well attested. This whale, being struck, soon run out the first boat's lines, and indeed, the lines which belonged to a second and a third boat, which came to the assistance of the first. A signal was made for still more line, and a boat was despatched to carry relief. But before the whale-boat could be reached, she was on a level with the water, being almost pulled under by the fugitive whale, while the harpooner, from the friction of the line,



was enveloped in smoke. At length, says the author to whom we are indebted for the story, when the relief was within a hundred yards, the crew were seen to throw their jackets upon the nearest ice, and then leap into the sea. After this, the end of the boat rose into the air, and making a majestic curve, was drawn beneath the waters with all the lines attached to it. The crew were saved. A vigorous pursuit was immediately commenced. The whale, being traced through narrow and intricate channels in the ice, was at length discovered considerably to the eastward. Three harpoons were then darted at him.

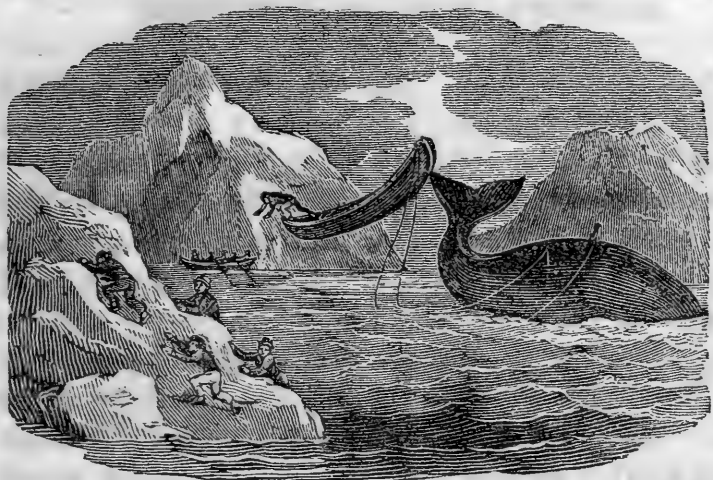
The lines of two other boats were then run out, when, by an accidental entanglement, they broke, and the whale went off with about four miles of rope, which, with the boat, were valued at \$700. The daring fishers again gave chase. The whale was seen, but again escaped. A third time it appeared—the whalers reached it. Two more harpoons were struck into it. The animal being now plied with lances, became entirely exhausted and yielded to its fate. It had by that time drawn out ten thousand four hundred and forty yards, or about six miles of line. Unfortunately one of the harpoons had been dis-

engaged, and a boat and thirteen lines, nearly two miles in length, attached to it, were detached and never recovered.

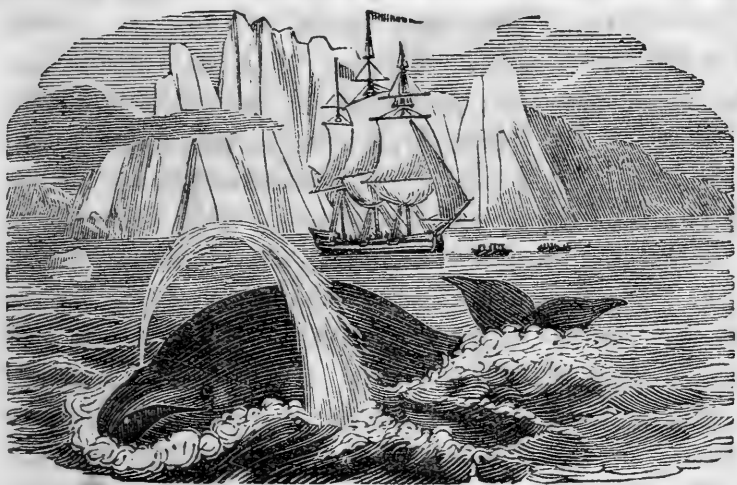
Several accounts are given by the same writer of distressing *shipwrecks* which have occurred in the northern seas. One of these, which I will relate, took place in the year 1777.

Capt. Broerties, in the *Guillamine*, arrived at the great bank of northern ice on the 22nd of June. Here he found fifty vessels moored and busied in the fishery. He began it very prosperously. Indeed, the very next day he killed a large whale. The day after, a tempest drove in the ice with such violence, that twenty-seven of the ships were surrounded, of which ten were lost. On the 25th of July, Broerties saw some appearance of an opening, and caused his vessel to be warped through by the boats. But after four days' labor she found herself, with four other ships, in a narrow basin, enclosed by ice on every side.

On the 1st of August, a violent storm began, which driving the ice against the vessels, placed them in the greatest danger for several days. On the 20th, a dreadful gale arose from the northeast, in which the *Guillamine* suffered considerable damage. In this awful tempest, two of the



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five ships went down, while a third sprung a number of leaks. The crews were taken on board the three remaining vessels, which made them very much crowded. On the 25th all three were completely frozen in. It was now resolved to send a party of twelve men to seek aid from four vessels, which had been driven a few days before into a station at a little distance. On their arrival, they found two of these had been dashed in pieces, and the other two were in a most deplorable condition. Two other ships, somewhat farther off, had perished in a similar manner. Meantime, the former came in sight of Greenland, and the tempest still driving them southward, Iceland at length was seen to their left. The two more distant vessels found a little opening, through which they contrived to escape. The crews of the three others were beginning to hope that they might do the same, when, on the 13th of September, a whole mountain of ice fell upon the Guillamine. The poor sailors, half naked, jumped out upon the frozen surface. They saved with great difficulty only a small portion of their provisions. One of the two other ships had just met a similar fate. There now remained only one, to which they all looked for refuge. By leaping from one piece of ice to

another, they contrived to reach this vessel, which, though in extreme distress herself, received them on board. Though now so shattered and over-crowded, she was obliged, immediately after, to accommodate fifty other seamen. These were the crew of another vessel, which had just gone down; the chief harpooner and twelve of the sailors having perished. These numerous companies, crowded into a crazy bark, suffered every kind of distress. Their distress, however, was increased, when, on the 11th of October, the vessel went to pieces, in the same manner as the others had done; leaving the poor sailors hardly time to leap upon the ice with their remaining provisions. With great difficulty they reached a field of ice of some extent. Here they made a sort of tent with their torn sails, which they had saved. But if they remained here they must certainly perish. They saw no way of escape except by scrambling over the frozen surface to the coast of Greenland, which was in sight. After much toil and danger they accomplished their object. Happily, they met with some inhabitants, who received them hospitably, and fed them with dried fish and seal's flesh. After the extreme hunger they had suffered, this seemed delicious food. Thence they

traveled across the dreary country, suffering much distress. They at length reached the Danish settlement of Frederikshaab. Here they were kindly treated, and at length were enabled to return to their native country."

Capt. Russel paused, after he had finished the stories, and William, who had listened very attentively, covered his face with his hands, and seemed to be thinking about something very important. At length he said,—“Father, those are dreadful stories which you have been telling us.”

“And yet, my son,” said Capt. Russel, “you are wishing to share in similar toils and perils.”

“I—I don’t know,” said William.

“Oh,” said Anne, “I should feel very bad indeed, if brother William should go to sea. How dreadful it would be, should he be wrecked !”

“Look, William,” said Capt. Russel—“look at your mother, and see how pale she is at the *thought* of your going.”

William was an affectionate son, and he flew to comfort his mother. Throwing his arms around her neck, he exclaimed—

“Mother—dear mother—I did not know that whaling was so dangerous. I only thought how glad I should be to see you all after a successful voyage, and how happy we should all be. I did not think about your anxiety while I was gone.

I will be a farmer, a merchant, or whatever else you wish me to be, and I dare say that I shall be happier than I should be, half frozen in the main-top, looking out for a whale."

Mrs. Russel smiled as she pressed her darling boy in her arms; but the tears came into her eyes as she said—

"I shall feel bad enough, when you have to leave us, my dear William, though you should go but a short distance from home; but I should be distressed indeed to have you depart on such a perilous enterprize. But, my children, you look tired. You have been so much interested in your father's stories, as to forget that it is quite late."

"I do feel sleepy," said Anne. "I'm sure I shall dream to night about whales as long as from the ground to the top of the church-steeple."

"I hope," said the old grandfather, "that my dear little grand-children will not forget, before they go to sleep, to thank that kind Providence which has preserved their father through danger and hardships, and once more restored him to us."





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